

Chairman Roers, Vice Chairman Costaneda, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Karen Kempert. I am the 9-1-1 Technology and Communications Coordinator for Cavalier County Emergency Communications Center, we provide service for the citizens of both Cavalier and Towner counties. Previously I was a Public Safety Telecommunicator for 5 years, I am also a member and Past President of the ND 9-1-1 Association.

House Bill 1419 places Public Safety Telecommunicators (dispatchers) into the ND PERs for the benefits that their public safety partners receive.

Public Safety Telecommunicators are under tremendous pressure continuously, every day they work, throughout their career. They are there on the scene with many of the senses that they have. Their ears hear the emotions in ones' voice, their eyes quite often see the after math of how people in the community are affected by emergencies, but most importantly their voices calm victims and by-standers in these situations. Their minds retain it all. Imagine the amount of stress that this puts on their bodies, their mental health, and the additional negative health impacts to the individual telecommunicator. Even with all this amount of stress and pressure that is put on the telecommunicator; they still have the mental acuity and emotional stability to play an accurate and decisive role in the unfolding event.

These mental health issues along with additional negative health impacts that are connected to a continuous high stress environment, if not addressed, can have irreversible implications that can jeopardize the entire emergency response system. Public Safety Telecommunicators need to have the ability to work in a high-pressure environment to assess situations correctly, provide appropriate guidance to callers and get the right public safety partner to the right place, with the correct equipment. Our professional Public Safety Telecommunicators are the voice and mind that give our public safety partners the ability to protect and save the people. Without their voice to provide communication to our emergency response system, it could mean life or death for those that are involved in an emergency.

Please support these very deserving, first, first responders by giving them the ability to access the benefits the ND PERs Public Safety Plan offers at the discretion of their governing bodies.

Respectfully,

Karen Kempert, ND CEM
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